FREEDOM

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CRACKDOWN IN OAXACA

Almost two years on from the murder of US Indymedia journalist Brad Will in Oaxaca, the Mexican police have swooped to arrest five of his comrades and issued warrants for around 270 others.

The Mexican Attorney General's office claims that APPO member Juan Manuel Martínez Moreno shot Brad Will twice at close range – the first time while he was filming protests and the second time when Will was being transported to a nearby hospital. Octavio Perez Perez, also of APPO, has been jailed on charges of perjury.

Three other APPO members are also reported to have been detained for their role in the 2006 protests. It is unknown if these activists are also accused of Will's murder or if the arrests are part of a larger crackdown on dissent in Oaxaca, Mexico.

The news has astounded his family and friends, who have been campaigning to see

page 3 ▸▸

LENS CAP EDINBURGH

STOP
THE
HARASSMENT
THE
HARASSMENT

Fifty members of the community group Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty surprised City finance leader Gordon Mackenzie at his surgery earlier this month, demanding that he stop persecuting low income people struggling to pay their council tax. ECAP presented Mackenzie with a large mock 'final notice' letter, warning him of his impending 'moral bankruptcy'. And demanded that he end to the intimidation and harassment of low income families. A Spokesperson for ECAP told a stunned and largely silent Mackenzie, "a large number of people are being targeted by your Sheriff Officers, and these people are being made to feel scared and intimidated in their own homes. We want this harassment stopped immediately," to which Mackenzie replied, "It is council policy."

SUPPORT THE SACKED CLEANERS

Two months ago five Colombian cleaners working for Amey Plc at the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) were suspended for daring to criticise Amey for putting an excessive workload onto ever fewer staff, for unilaterally changing terms and conditions and for disrespecting grievance procedures. The five have since been sacked. They are all members of the Prospect union and some of Unite-T&G as well. Two are political refugees.

When Amey took over the contract in December 2006 it found itself faced with a largely Latin American migrant workforce that was organised and conscious of its rights. They had recently unionised and were taking steps to gain recognition – a right afforded to all other staff at the NPL.

In order to enforce a serious increase in workload and downgrade in conditions, Amey tricked the cleaners into attending a fake training session, only for the doors to be bolted and seven of the workers to be taken away by the police. Of these, three were deported – one to Colombia and two to Brazil. All lost their jobs.

These workers were never replaced, and there are now ten cleaners doing the work previously done by 36! And of those remaining, four are temps earning the minimum wage or thereabouts – as opposed to the living wage which the original workforce had secured before Amey came in!

The sacking of the five workers is a direct result of the remaining workers' attempts to

page 2 ▸▸

INSIDE ▸▸

'Justice' cut to the bone page 3
Trouble on the Tube page 4
Anti-fascist murdered page 7
The school leaving age pages 8–9
Svartfrosk column page 10
Reviews pages 14 and 15

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

EDUCATION: Six unions representing 250,000 college lecturers and support staff in England, including cleaners and caterers, have accepted a 3.2% pay offer, saying that it was one of the best deals in the public sector. However the offer remains over 3% below even CPI inflation levels.

EDUCATION: The sector could be the latest victim of the economic downturn, with warnings that the probable withdrawal of a major company from the Unity academy in Middlesbrough may be the first of many.

The company bought into the governing board of the academy, which seeks to raise private capital in exchange for direct influence over education, as part of a general drive from the government to bring in private sector values to education itself alongside PFI building schemes for service provision.

In related news, it seems several public schools may be moving into the academy scheme to avoid closure as the downturn bites into the number of parents prepared to pay for private education.

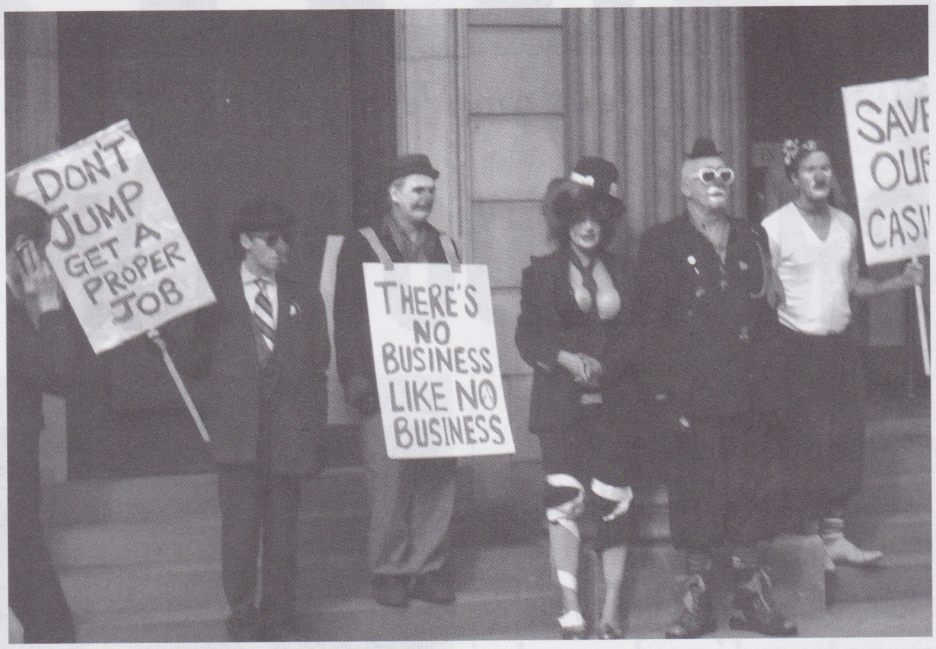
FIRE SERVICE: South Yorkshire fire crews have accused managers of being hell bent on confrontation over moves to impose new shifts. They say there is growing anger among fire crews over new threats to impose these new shifts. Firefighters want to know why there has been no negotiation with their union before South Yorkshire fire authority councillors received the proposals for consideration. The Fire Brigades Union has still not been officially given details of the plans, although full press packs have been sent to the media.

INFLATION: A spike in inflation is due to blow a £3 billion hole in Britain's welfare budget. The 16-year peak in inflation for September has direct consequences on public spending, since pensions and benefits are uprated each year by a figure based on the September retail price index (RPI).

A spokesman for Unison, whose members include NHS staff and local government employees, said: "The latest increase in inflation strengthens the case to reopen the NHS pay deal for 2008–09. Local government workers are also looking for a fair deal as they take their case to arbitration." The PCS, which will announce the result of its ballot on Friday, said that the new inflation figures "make it even more urgent that the government reviews its public sector pay policy".

SURVEILLANCE: Everyone who buys a mobile telephone will be forced to register their identity on a national database under government plans to extend massively the powers of state surveillance. Phone buyers would have to present a passport or other official form of identification at the point of purchase. A compulsory national register for the owners of all 72 million mobile phones in Britain would be part of a much bigger database being considered.

LENS CAP THE CITY


DON'T JUMP GET A PROPER JOB
THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE NO BUSINESS
SAVE OUR CASI

Turned out to be a busy Black Friday with tumbling share prices in the City of London on 10th October. An early afternoon protest outside the Bank of England. See newagenda.demon.co.uk for more.

Support the sacked cleaners

◀◀ page 1

protest against this trend. Amey say that they were fired for bringing the company into disrepute – that is, handing out a leaflet to other NPL staff stating what was happening. Considering these workers had tried to move grievances which were never listened to, what Amey is actually saying is: these workers were sacked for taking the only course of action available to them, or to anyone whose rights are not recognised by their employers.

But this small story is a perfect lesson in how migration controls work, and what role they play in the economy. It's clear that, in order to take the contract at NPL, Amey had to make a bid stating that it could do the same work as the previous company for less money. This 'race to the bottom' is the way the market works.

But how can a company do the same work for less? By keeping wages down, enforcing a bigger workload on less workers, using agency workers (mostly hired as 'self-employed' 'one-person companies') that have no rights and aren't given the appropriate training. How can they get away with this? By counting on a workforce that is not aware of its labour rights, who has less options in the work market, or is too precarious or afraid to challenge their conditions.

In other words, the migrant worker who has little or no support network in this country, and whose visa status can often be irregular, is the ideal worker for companies like Amey: the guarantee that they can keep on racing to the bottom. It is by exploiting their precariousness that Amey can make its £75 million net annual profit.

And what if they find organised workers who won't accept such exploitation? That's when immigration controls come in handy: to punish or threaten with deportation and sacking; to replace them with others who won't 'cause any problems'. Why won't they cause any problems? Often because they are irregular themselves – but their visa status is not a problem, unless they demand their rights.

Amey knows this game very well. It is a majority shareholder in Tubelines, which cleans parts of the Underground. Tube cleaners who dared to strike for a living wage this summer were faced with a corporate response consisting of paper checks, immigration raids and deportations to safe, prosperous countries like Sierra Leone and the Congo. Once these retaliations take place, the cleaning companies can just hire a whole new batch of migrant workers – or, like at the NPL, take advantage of this situation and just get a small amount of people to do what used to be done by many more.

111 Victoria Street
SUPPORT THE SACKED AMEY WORKE

'Justice' cut to the bone

Severe cuts being proposed across the justice system could lead to more severe pressure on the legal aid system – which is already groaning under the weight of changes imposed earlier this year.

Cash shortages which have appeared across the public sector as the credit crunch starts to bite could see as many as 10,000 people lose their jobs across the legal sector.

As inflation rises and cash dries up to the treasury, the government is demanding that the Ministry of Justice save more then £900 million over the next two years.

Savings measures include the loss of 9,891 jobs in the prison, probation and court services – more than a tenth of the workforce – with one in three coming through redundancies. Over 3,000 of these will come directly from the courts. These cuts will come alongside a total freeze on new recruits or the use of agency workers. There are also plans to charge immigrants for their own deportation appeal hearings and to halve the legal representation at court hearings over the future of children.

Judges themselves have spoken out against the cost-recuperation programmes being pushed by Jack Straw, but current planning indicates that up to £46 million is expected to come from charging migrants – who have often been barred from finding work to pay for such hearings.

Severe cuts are expected in the prison service, where 3,000 jobs could go despite plans to expand the sector with the introduction of new Titan jails, and in the probation service 1,320 jobs could be axed.

Such widespread cuts would be likely to significantly undermine the right to a fair hearing, forcing the remaining court system – around 100 courts could close altogether – to rush through legal processes, cut back on jury hearings and significantly increase the risk of miscarriages of justice.

The news comes in the same year as a raft of controversial measures were pushed through restricting the number of people who could access legal aid and implementing legal advice call-centres to reduce costs.

The changes, which happened in January, also heralded the introduction of flat fess for legal aid cases, cutting the number of laywers prepared to work the cases and the amount of work they were prepared to put in.

The flat fees effectively mean that lawyers get paid the same for a ten-minute case as they do for a six-month one, hugely undermining support in the event of a complex legal battle.

Lawyers are now entirely unavailable if you're arrested for any of the following: breach of bail, breach of court injunction, breach of the peace, drunk and disorderly, fare evasion or having warrants out for your arrest – you'll get one phone call to the Criminal Defence Call Centre. You are only allowed to call your own solicitor if you pay privately.

Crackdown in Oaxaca

◀◀ page 1

paramilitaries caught on camera by Brad as he was being murdered brought to justice. They accuse the Mexican government of using Brad's death to crack down on internal dissent for a second time – it was originally used as the justification for military intervention which crushed the 2006 resistance movement which he was chronicling.

Brad was assassinated while reporting and filming the uprising in Oaxaca, when over 300 groups in the city and surrounding area joined forced to temporarily seize control of the city and demand the ousting of hated governor Ulises Ruiz under the banner of umbrella group APPO.

Multiple witnesses say he was shot by paramilitaries who are seen in photos shooting towards Will. The paramilitaries are: Juan Carlo Soriano, municipal police officer; Manuel Aguilar, council personnel chief; Able Santiago Zarate; and Pedro Carmona, mayor of Felipe Carrillo Puerto de Santa Lucia del Camino.

The government claims Will was shot at close range, therefore implicating the APPO activists around him. To prove this claim, the government at one point stated that the autopsy found powder burns on Will's body consistent with a close-range shooting. However, the medical examiner who performed the autopsy contradicted this claim, saying he did not find powder burns on Will's body.

A mass release of arrest warrants has also been rumoured in the city as the case goes on. Blogger Angry White Kid, who has reported extensively on the situation, said: "The numbers I've been hearing have ranged between 250 and more than 300 warrants.

"If I were an authoritarian government, I would think sweeping up APPO members before the Congress and commemorations in November would be a good tactic – forcing the movement to focus on freeing prisoners instead of organising and unifying with other movements."

PUBLIC SECTOR

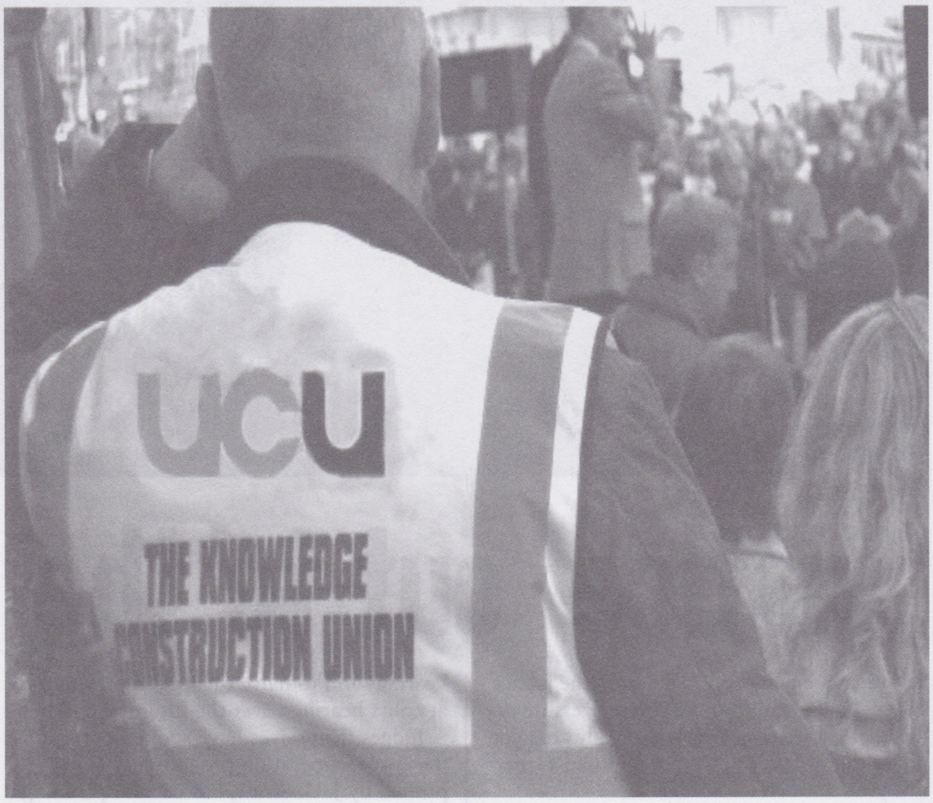
Intimidation fears for uni workers

Support workers at Sussex University are facing intimidation and harassment from their bosses during their ongoing dispute, say unionists.

Members of Unite overwhelmingly voted to take strike action to protect the University of Sussex Pension and Assurance Scheme, Sussex's final salary pension scheme. Unison, the other trade union organising support workers, has been holding an indicative ballot to ascertain whether they should take strike action. In response, senior management at the university sent out forms in which workers are to declare their intentions with regards to their participation in the strike action. If workers did not fill these out, the forms stated, their pay would be docked "until [senior management is] satisfied that the member of staff has not participated in the strike".

These forms, which legally workers are under no obligation to fill in, are seen by some as an attempt to sabotage the strike by intimidating Unite workers. Senior management's behaviour also divides workers at large at the University by falsely implying that non-Unite workers could suffer as a result of the strike if they chose not co-operate with senior management. During discussions on an on-line web forum, a worker at Sussex said "a lot of people who aren't out on strike that day are understandably quite worried, as they want to support the strike but don't want to get into trouble".

UCU, the faculty's trade union, was moved to send out a statement informing members that there is no obligation to fill in the forms when it was revealed that even some of their members were asked to declare their intention. "The question should not be asked of UCU members in the first place," they said. UCU have also requested that senior management stop making any such requests of members in the future, whilst re-emphasising that UCU "would encourage members to provide as much support as possible to Unite members who are picketing".



The strike, the first ever to occur at Sussex over specifically local issues, was partly caused by Senior Management's decision to close USPAS to new workers and to force up the contributions made by staff to the scheme whilst lowering the university's rate of contribution. A spokesman for senior management said "the University is acting responsibly to protect local pension provision at Sussex". Support workers affected fear that this may be the beginning of a slippery slope down to reduced pensions for them and know that this is an unfair deal towards any new workers employed by the university. There are also fears that this deal will disproportionally negatively affect female members of staff.

Jane Kraut

Consumption by the rich is unaffected

Investment institutions have collapsed, banking empires fallen, billions have been wiped off of the stock market in seconds. But underneath the apparently tumbling edifice of capitalism things for the rich don't look that different.

At the height of the stock market wipe out a Saville Row tailor reported that a customer from the City spent £30,000 on suites in one visit to his shop. Rather than throw themselves out of the top windows of their banks, those responsible for the financial mess we are in are apparently going out and spending a fortune on new suits.

"A client who works in the financial world ordered six suits in one day" says Tony Lutwyche, a tailor based in Soho – "the bespoke suit market is buoyant. There is still a lot of money out there" he added. Another tailor – Huntsman – whose hand-made suits start at £4,000 (you do get trousers and a jacket for that) are apparently "very positive".

It's not just hand made suits that are in demand. Expensive retro glasses are now *de rigour* for the rich. London-based company Oliver Goldsmith launched a range of luxury children's sunglasses and prescription lenses this year and Cutler & Gross plan to next year.

Pop into any top range glasses boutique along Bond Street and you will see that replica NHS style glasses are all the rage. Apparently genuine tortoiseshell is rare these days, which is presumably good news for tortoises, but according to Cutler and Gross "popular. We sell them for £3,000 and sold three pairs very recently."

Despite the impending worldwide recession this year has seen more than forty new men's scents being launched in the US alone this year. In Britain men spent £776 million on cologne last year and it's no longer Old Spice – fancy designer fragrances are all the rage. Sales of modern art, as Damien Hurst recently showed, continue to boom.

Hurst sold £111 million worth of art, although he did give some away to charity. Mind you, when you have hundreds of millions of pounds that's not too hard (and it's tax deductible).

In 1899 the Norwegian Thorstein Veblen in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* coined the term 'conspicuous consumption'. He used the term to describe the spending habits of the upper class who used their enormous wealth to manifest social power, whether real or perceived. While capitalism survives the rich will continue to fritter money on £3,000 NHS lookalike glasses and we'll continue to struggle.

IN BRIEF

CONSTRUCTION: JCB has announced that it could make up to 500 more redundancies as sales continue to slump. Because of a continuing fall in orders, it would have to cut production by around a fifth and reduce its workforce. This will be the second round of redundancies by the company this year. Earlier this month, they confirmed that they had made 379 people redundant – 184 of them voluntarily and 195 compulsorily.

FINANCE: Top dogs at recently-nationalised mortgage giant Northern Rock have escaped legal repercussions over their part in the collapse of the bank, after the company revealed it would not be taking any action. Adam Applegarth, Northern Rock's deposed chief executive, and his colleagues were heavily criticised for their roles in loading the bank with large amounts of bad debt, making it an early victim of the credit crunch which has devastated the markets. However Northern Rock said that its external advisers had completed a review and decided that there were insufficient grounds to proceed with any action for negligence.

HOUSING: Collapsing house prices are plunging 60,000 homeowners a month into negative equity, which may mean the country is on course for a worse crisis than the 1990s crash. At current trends, two million households will enter negative equity by 2010, outstripping the 1.8 million affected at the bottom of the last housing slump.

SANITATION: Five Latin American cleaners are claiming unfair dismissal by the cleaning contractor at the National Physical Laboratory. Supporters say their sacking was a clear retaliation to attempts at organising, receiving union recognition and protesting at the way their standards have been lowered by Amey since taking over the contract in 2006. Among alleged acts of intimidation was a migration raid at NPL that resulted in seven dismissals and three deportations.

SUPERMARKETS: Tesco has been caught out attempting to force its suppliers to pick up the cost of a major new price-cutting war with main rival Asda, putting further pressure on them to cut costs to the bone. Suppliers have complained they are effectively having their selling costs dictated to them by the retailing giant, which was cleared of monopoly practices by the Competition Commission last year.

TELECOMMUNICATION: Telecoms giant Cable & Wireless has confirmed that it will make redundancies after having taken over rival Thus. Staff at the Thus offices in Glasgow and Livingston are under a 90-day consultation. Staff say they only became aware of the plans after seeing minutes of the company's Exchange Forum, an informal group involving management of the non-unionised company and shop floor reps.

Tube trouble

Tube unionist warns of more conflict to come

Tube worker and RMT unionist Andy Littlechild has beaten an attempt to oust him by Transport for London (TfL), but in an interview with *Freedom* has warned this is not the end of it.

Andy, who is a health and safety rep at TfL-run Metronet, was ordered off the job at 3am in the morning – with no transport home – after a four-hour grilling by management earlier this year, for his refusal to wear safety equipment in spite of it not being required as the company should have made the area he was working in safe enough.

Explaining the verdict, Andy said: "They found me guilty on all counts, put me on a year's warning, but that was suspended the next day and I was told it wouldn't be put on my record. They realised there was a strength of feeling."

He is one of three reps taken on by bosses after several major union successes, including three successful strike actions.

In one case, a man was at a Metronet depot picketing in support of striking cleaners when he was accused of threatening behaviour. In another case, a member was accused of intimidatory behaviour in meetings. Both cases were dropped after early intervention by the RMT.

Andy believes these recent cases are not isolated, and that recent changes to the rules could see more in future: "Since Metronet went into administration that can be seen as the turning point. They started parachuting Transport for London people in, particularly Paul Tullet and a couple of safety guys, and that's when things started to get stiff.

"We have a good organising model and we have seen that in the last three disputes which we have won. At TfL there's a lot more division but we want to expand our model across the business. I think there's lots of reasons why they want to nobble us.

"They changed the rules now to try and catch people – if you go about your union duties you have to have written permission from your supervisor, explain what you are doing, etc. But this means management talks can't take place, as they don't organise them in advance and tend to do it ad hoc.

"So if we can't do these meetings without permission it opens us up to disciplinary proceedings. They want to normalise industrial relations, and to do that they want to discipline people. If they think they can get away with it, they'll do it."

The next big fight will be over pay for 2009 – which could potentially provide the flashpoint for London mayor Boris Johnson to try and fulfil his election pledge to break the tube unions.

"The next thing coming up is the pay talks for next year, and I think it's going to be really interesting to see how that pans out." Andy notes, "It coincides with that of London Underground and we think they'll be wheeling out the mantra of accepting a pay cut as the only way forward. We don't know which way things are going to go at TfL, it's going to need reps and activists to organise."

Rob Ray

MIND THE GAP

INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

BAHAMAS: Hundreds of Chinese labourers working on a stalled resort project on the tiny island of Turks and Caicos took developers hostage after they failed to pay their salaries. Twelve men were held captive on the long-abandoned island near the Bahamas after their company run out of cash and the project was suspended.

The company has blamed the collapse of the US banks financing the project for their failure to complete the project and pay their workers. The workers are demanding full compensation and safe return to China.

IRAQ: Employees from the State General Company for Textile Industries in Wassit, Iraq, staged a demonstration calling on the government to pay them their outstanding dues. On Wednesday 9th October the company's personnel demonstrated in front of the provincial council building demanding the government to pay wages owed. The company has a total of 5,500 employees, who live in circumstances and fear privatisation of the state-owned company.

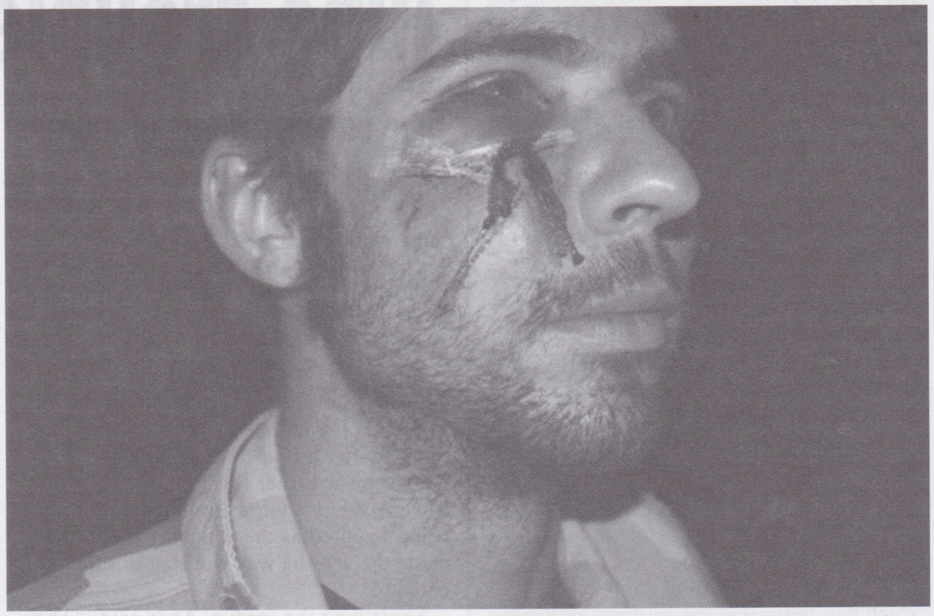
ISRAEL: Israel's siege of Gaza is forcing tens of thousands of Palestinian out of work as even basic raw materials are no longer available to keep businesses running. Over 42,000 Gazan construction workers have lost their jobs as a result of the Israeli ban on imports of construction materials, with construction sector sustained overall losses estimated at $58 million. Only five of the 120 registered construction companies in the Gaza Strip are still operating. At least 624 textile and clothing workshops and factories have also had to shut down, at the cost of over 25,000 local jobs. Forty-five percent of working age adults in the Gaza Strip are now officially unemployed.

MEXICO: Striking teachers in the Mexican state of Morelos have started negotiations with the state following weeks of motorway blockades, occupations, national demonstrations and police violence. Opposing an education reform bill, the teachers faced federal and local Mexican police who broke up protests by attacking teachers and their supporters, leaving dozens detained or injured. Negotiations are ongoing, but the state has suspended payment to the striking teachers and begun hiring scabs. State forces are concerned that the situation could escalate into a similar situation to Oaxaca in 2006, when a strike by teachers led to an uprising.

USA: Walmart have launched yet another attack against workers in North America by closing a store after staff formed a union.

The infamously anti-union company shut down their business at Gatineau, Quebec, stating that the union contract won last August didn't fit with their business model. In April 2005 they shut a store in Jonquiere, Quebec, and dismissed over 200 workers just as arbitration for a first-contract was about to start.

LENS CAP USA



On Wednesday 15th October 2008, Iraq veterans who were protesting outside the third Presidential Debate were met with serious violence by police. IVAW member Nick Morgan was left bloodied and nearly unconscious after being trampled by a police officer on horseback.

Transport unions shut down Belgium

Belgian workers striking against the rising cost of living and demanding better pay and work conditions shut down the nation's transport infrastructure this month.

In what was billed as a one-day general strike by the mainstream unions, workers in key industries took to the streets and brought the country to a standstill.

Public transport workers downed tools on Monday 6th October, forcing the cancellation of all high-speed international trains as well as a number of ports.

Provincial trains and the main train stations were shut down while in Brussels all tram services were shut down with only a fraction of underground rail and bus services left running.

Supermarket workers at the Delhaize and Carrefour hypermarkets held strikes in Brussels and Wallonia in the south of the country. Production at an Audi plant also stopped for the day. Public services workers – ranging from education to garbage collection – also participated, with some trials postponed when prison officers refused to escort prisoners to court. Kindergartens and libraries were also shut in Antwerp.

Workers aimed to hit the government before the announcement of their new budget this month and highlight the effects of inflation on real wages.

Striking workers, who are feeling the brunt of the current global capitalist crisis, highlighted the rising prices of gas, electricity and heating oil as key factors behind the strike.

The action crossed Belgium's unique linguistic divide hitting the French, Flemish and northern, Dutch-speaking parts of the country.

Weeler

Notes from the United States

The news in the United States continues to be dominated by the financial crisis. Congress has estimated that $2 trillion (£1 trillion) worth of retirement savings has been wiped out over the last 15 months. That corresponds to about a fifth of all such savings held. The second week in October was the Dow Jones industrial average's worst week in its 112-year history. It lost a record 18%. The previous worst week was in 1933. Since the market peaked a year ago, US stocks have lost $8.4 trillion (£4.2 trillion). The 'clock' which displays the national debt in New York ran out of space: when the national debt exceeded $10 trillion in September, the sign could not display the full amount.

On the one hand the Treasury is poised to outsource the Wall Street 'bail-out' to private sources. Apparently, the government is to invoke special authorities which it claims to have to hire contractors and consultants and thus side-stepping standard procedures. The watchdog group Taxpayers for Common Sense has expressed concerns that money will find its way to the very firms who have

page 7 ▶▶

Moscow anti-fascist murdered

Neo-nazis in Moscow have murdered another young Russian antifascist this month. 26-year-old Fedor Filatov died in hospital from multiple knife wounds sustained in a vicious attack early in the morning of 10th October.

Local antifascists have stated that the attack was a planned action by the far right and a Russian neo-nazi group has already claimed responsibility for the murder on an internet forum.

Representatives of the Russian Antifa movement explained that Filatov, who was known in the movement as 'Nok', was jumped by a group of fascists near his home as he was leaving for work. According to the group's information, four to eight people armed with knives were waiting for him in his courtyard. Local antifascists have stated that they consider the incident a clearly premeditated political murder and a serious attack on their movement stating "there is not a shadow of a doubt that he died for his beliefs".

"We, friends and comrades, deeply grieve his untimely death. We remember Fedjay as a staunch friend and a fine person who could not pass by a stranger's misfortune or leave a comrade in a trouble."

Filatov helped to found the Moscow Trojan Skinheads, a social group of anti-racist skinheads from Moscow and the Moscow Oblast.

The attack comes in the run up to National Unity Day, a holiday established by President Vladimir Putin to replace the former commemoration of the Bolshevik revolution, Day of Accord and Conciliation, which used to take place on 7th November. Marches held on the day typically serve as recruiting grounds for neo-nazis and far-right organisations, who openly carry banners with swastikas and shout xenophobic slogans

Fedor Filatov

Human rights groups have registered xenophobic attacks in 37 Russian regions this year with Central Asians and members of anti-fascist organisations being the primary targets.

October has seen the largest increase in the rate of far-right attacks, something many Russian groups believe is due to preparations for the march. At previous years' rallies in Moscow, demonstrators shouted 'Russia for Russians!', made neo-Nazi salutes and held placards with swastikas, anti-semitic and anti-immigration slogans.

While President Putin and the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, have condemned such slogans the sentiment is increasingly being manipulated by mainstream political parties, who immigrant communities have accused of being too lenient in pursuing ethnically motivated crimes.

Unfortunately Fedor is not the only worker murdered by Russian nazi gangs in recently. In November 2005, activist and musician Timur Kacharava, aged 20, died from knife wounds in St Petersburg following an attack.

In April 2006, 19-year-old antifascist Alexander Ryukhin was murdered by six neo-nazis outside a concert.

In January 2007, Ivan Yelin was stabbed twenty times by unidentified attackers on the outskirts of St Petersburg.

In March of this year, 16-year-old Alexei Krylov died in Moscow after a group of fifteen neo-nazis armed with knives attacked seven young people outside metro station.

Weeler

Notes from the Unites States

◀◀ page 6

misused it. A similar use of private firms during the savings and loans crisis of the late 1980s led to what even the capitalist establishment called subsequently 'untrammelled pay-outs to the private sector and reprimands from Congress and the Government Accountability Office.'

But on the other hand the Treasury Department is considering partially nationalising the US banking system, taking ownership stakes in some banks, as has happened in the UK. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said in mid-October that the recently approved $700 billion (£350 billion) financial bail-out bill authorises him wide to 'inject capital' into the banking system.

As could be expected, war, violence, destruction and pain benefit: an official at the Pentagon chose his words carefully – "We do benefit when things look less positive in civil society. That is a situation where more people are willing to give us a chance." The Pentagon recently confirmed that all four branches of the armed forces had reached their recruitment goals for the fiscal year ending on 30th September.

There are protests, though. The largely feminist group with a strong anarchist contingent, Code Pink, has been demonstrating outside the New York Stock Exchange. Dana Balicki remarked: "Over the past two weeks, in fact, protesting the bailout; protesting the billions more for Wall Street, for the friends of Henry Paulson and the Bush administration; and recognising that with all of that money going for the bailout, there was going to be way less money to go for any of the social issues that we are … social programmes that actually stabilise our society, that actually bring strength to the American economy."

Louis Further

Hotel is forced to eat its words

Over 60 catering staff at Mount Carmel hospital in Dublin, Ireland, declared victory this month after their seven day long strike forced management to back down. They were protesting over the outsourcing of their jobs, describing their week-long fight with hospital management as tough, but worth fighting for. Scabs from an employment agency were bussed in at 5am, before the 6am pickets, in an attempt to undermine the workers' action.

The settlement guarantees employment for all the workers with the outsourcing company along with an improved pension scheme and a goodwill payment. Ten employees who did not wish to transfer won severance packages and workers who live on the hospital grounds will now be allowed to remain.

The picket line cheered at the announcement of the back-down by management with workers announcing that they had fought a hard fight and won.

Forced to stay in school – a mo

Dave Douglass looks at plans to increase the age of compulsory education

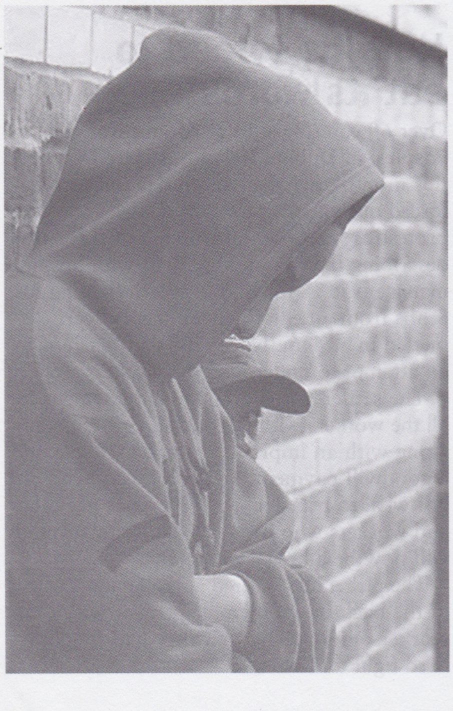
It seems incredible but last month, a huge chunk of the adult young population were stripped of the bulk of their civil liberties. From now on, they will be unable to go where they want, when they want, and will be under constant constraints on movement. They must all without exception surrender to direct physical control and restraint for a minimum of two years. This is imposed without charge, without trial, without appeal, and it seems without the slightest peep of protest.

Sixteen year olds will be banned from leaving school, banned from taking up paid work and careers, banned from deciding their own futures. It appears not to have been introduced as a bill in Parliament, wasn't debated, avoided publicity and was tagged on the end of an existing act. Both the Tories and Libdems had promised to oppose it in the Commons because of the compulsion and enforcement being applied.

True to form, Brown just brought it in through the back door without debate or vote.

Next year the law will change again, taking away freedom of movement, and work choice from seventeen year olds too. You will be eighteen before the state will allow you to decide for yourself what you do with your own life.

The fact that the state can move in and remove the civil liberties of hundreds of thousands of subjects, without crime or charge or appeal and effectively subject them to house arrest and two years of close monitored supervision seems not to have impacted one bit on civil libertarians or the masses ranks of 'the left'.



This could well be because very few if any teenagers have any contact with the left and libertarian movement these days and the aud codgers of the movement, if they even know about it, don't see the problem. Yet the implications are horrendous.

This is nothing short of internment, for the majority of these young adults who would otherwise have chosen to leave forced education and seek their own way in life.

It is a form of social conscription aimed at restraining a new 'enemy within'. How will it be enforced, how will big grown-up young adults be policed and constrained in the classroom?

Soldiers, fresh from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan are to be employed as 'class room mentors' and 'school assistants' as soon as their terms of engagement are over. A special crash teacher training programme, free to ex-soldiers is to be created to ensure ex-combat soldiers will be engaged in every school as teachers. Not surprisingly such a scheme was never offered to the tens of thousands of ex-coal miners or dockers, since the lessons these new teachers would come with would be of a markedly different political complexion than the former SAS man or commando.

The press and government have created a social climate in which being a teenager is of itself problematic and criminalised. Just being a teenager hanging out on your own street becomes 'anti social' behaviour. Natural exuberance and sexuality become causes for massive head scratching research and anti crime measures. Daily the television will find an angle to show teenagers doing something to strike the fear of murder and mayhem in the community. Being a teenager makes you automatically guilty, of something, or potentially something,

Blair in his crazed Christian moralist madness obviously thought puberty was some sort of plot by perverts to corrupt 'children'. So this measure locks you up and puts you under close control and restriction before you do anything. At the same time as the media creates the image of the teenage terrorist and criminal, the state is ramming down everyone's throat the notion that the poor wee things are just 'children'.

The press true to its political masters always now refer to teenagers of 16, 17 and 18 as children, as against young adults. Childhood is now imposed by law and punishable in the courts for transgression against this designation. Smoking of course is now raised from 16 to 18.

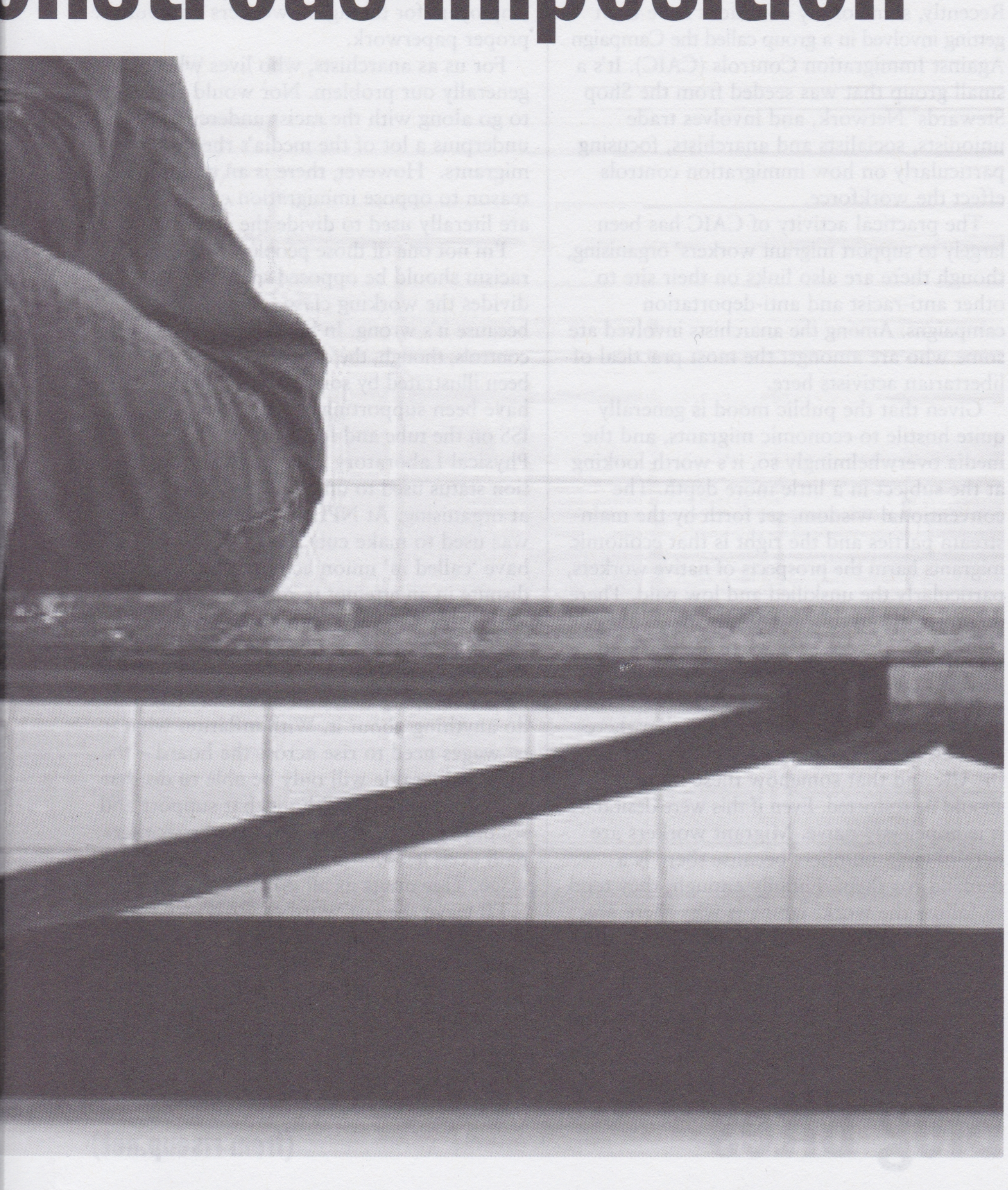
The right to consume alcohol, to be together drinking alcohol, to be outside drinking alcohol, buying alcohol have all now suddenly become *de facto* crimes and illustrative of criminal behaviour. The supermarkets now demand you look 25 or 30 to buy it, or else produce ID. The push to raise the age to 21 is clearly on.

Actually being teenagers hanging out together without alcohol is clearly deemed a crime in many areas with cops and community officers chasing young people off their own estates and demanding they stay home.All of this is a stalking horse for ever-increasing sexually repressive laws. Until recently the age of consent in Britain was 16, but piece by piece the Blair/Brown government has been pushing this to 18 in line with most US states, by adding more and more restrictions as to who can actually have sex at this age. At present you can marry at 16 in Britain, have a husband or wife and children and a home; how will this fit in with compulsory school attendance until 18?

The two laws are clearly incompatible.

This is all to reinforce the process to

onstrous imposition



infantilise young adults. American 'rape' laws have been steadily introduced which changed the existing laws of 'unlawful sexual intercourse' to 'rape'. Consenting underage teenagers would hitherto be denied the fact of actual consent and instead be deemed 'raped' regardless of facts of the relationship, or indeed the fact that their partners are usually their teenage boy/girl friends.

Things have changed right enough from when I were a lad, we'd have been rioting in the street, refusing to go, and hordes of lefties of all descriptions would be taking up our cause. Perhaps resurrecting the old US slogan 'Hell No We Won't Go!'

So we've got the cause, got the slogan, where's the protests? None so far, and one wonders deeply why?

From an educational point of view, there are at any one time hundreds and thousands of teenagers forced to attend school which offers them nothing and they hate. They 'kick off' daily at school, attack teachers, wreck schools and make life a misery for the youngsters who actually want to be there. Both groups can't wait for the sixteenth birthday so that the dissidents can leave, and they be allowed to work without harassment and distraction.

Those who leave can't wait to get work, money in their pocket, enter young adulthood and be free of the constraints of parents and school authority. In days gone by masses of them would enter the industrial workforce and join unions, take an interest in the world of work, and by a diverse route often discover training, education, and political involvement.

A great many mature students would take up higher education in their late twenties, thirties and older, or would develop non-vocational education discovering that education can actually be fun and not associated with having your individuality and freedom ripped out.

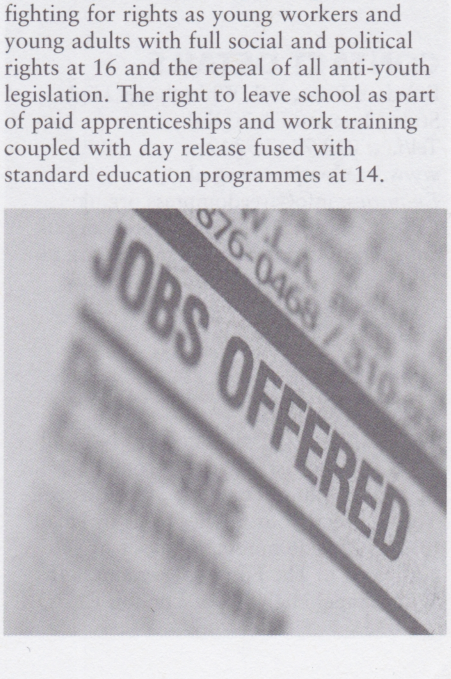
The alternative is what we are now being forced to have, childhood forced down your genes until your 18, detention without appeal. It will undoubtedly lead to rebellion in the classroom and real anti-social crime as acts of defiance and frustration. The presence of on site school police forces are bound to happen along with the ex-squaddie hard man/women, virtual classroom bouncers and door staff. The government will continue to call this part of its 'education' programme when actually we will all see it is part of their obsession with social engineering and control.

These measures ought to have been fought as hard as the poll tax – that it hasn't shows just how cowed and battered people have become in Britain. Although the measures don't apply in Scotland where you can still leave school at 16 if you wish. The SNP are not be outdone though and just to demonstrate that they too are scared shitless of these young people they will raise the drinking age to 21. Overnight it will make hundreds of thousands of young people criminals, will re-enact all the bollocks of prohibition with raids on pubs and parties, battering people, arresting people, jailing people.

But where is the mass youth resistance? A tactical alliance of all those between 18 and 21 pledged to campaign and vote against any politician who supports this measure might change a few minds. Evidence suggests a healthy movement against the proposal and the criminalisation of teenagers is already afoot in Scotland.

Far better though simple mass and united public defiance would be the best resistance to both acts of government autocracy. Tens of thousands of teenagers refusing to go to school, demanding their freedom of choice and civil liberties could stop this process in its tracks.

More generally, teenagers ought to be fighting for rights as young workers and young adults with full social and political rights at 16 and the repeal of all anti-youth legislation. The right to leave school as part of paid apprenticeships and work training coupled with day release fused with standard education programmes at 14.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Bookfairs come and go, but it seems the population has been changing a bit. There have been some suggestions that the numbers were down this year – which is always a difficult one to call. The main hall was certainly less packed, but the opening of the Octagon area, up a winding series of corridors, did mean that things were more spread out.

In terms of the take, there don't seem to have been many major complaints, and the quality of the speakers booked was on the whole pretty high. Freedom Press itself did pretty well in terms of sales. In fact, even the International Communist Current – who have a table outside every year as they are not allowed a stall – were pleased with their take.

Freedom Press also hosted the unofficial bookfair after-party, which was a roaring success and carried on long after it was supposed to end. It was good to see many of the old faces turn up, along with a few new ones. The space was perfect for the night, with the newly-emptied ground floor, the alley outside and even the current bookshop, all packed with people.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 8th November 2008 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 30th October. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to The Editors, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

Recently, some of my comrades have been getting involved in a group called the Campaign Against Immigration Controls (CAIC). It's a small group that was seeded from the Shop Stewards' Network, and involves trade unionists, socialists and anarchists, focusing particularly on how immigration controls effect the workforce.

The practical activity of CAIC has been largely to support migrant workers' organising, though there are also links on their site to other anti-racist and anti-deportation campaigns. Among the anarchists involved are some who are amongst the most practical of libertarian activists here.

Given that the public mood is generally quite hostile to economic migrants, and the media overwhelmingly so, it's worth looking at the subject in a little more depth. The conventional wisdom, set forth by the mainstream parties and the right is that economic migrants harm the prospects of native workers, particularly the unskilled and low paid. There is some truth in this, by simply increasing the supply of workers, wages are likely to be depressed. However, the conclusions drawn from such a basic analysis have a few flaws.

The usual conclusion drawn is that there are 'too many' people looking for work in the UK and that somehow these numbers should be restricted. Even if this were desirable, it is hopelessly naive. Migrant workers are here in large numbers because there is a demand for them. Funnily enough, they tend to follow the work, which is why there are lots here, the US, the Arabian Gulf and other oil-rich regions. The government and their media allies are now trying to restrict the demand for these workers; new laws penalise employers for taking on workers without the proper paperwork.

For us as anarchists, who lives where isn't generally our problem. Nor would we want to go along with the racist undercurrent that underpins a lot of the media's rhetoric about migrants. However, there is an additional reason to oppose immigration controls, they are literally used to divide the working class.

I'm not one of those people who thinks that racism should be opposed merely because it divides the working class – I'm against it because it's wrong. In the case of immigration controls, though, the divisive effect has recently been illustrated by some of the struggles CAIC have been supporting. Cleaners working for ISS on the tube and for Amey at the National Physical Laboratory have had their immigration status used to undermine workers' efforts at organising. At NPL an immigration raid was used to make cuts in the workforce. ISS have 'called in' union activists in their recent dispute in an attempt to intimidate organisers with threats to their legal status.

Having migrant status means workers are much more likely to accept lower pay, possibly even criminally low, and much less likely to do anything about it. With inflation what it is, wages need to rise across the board – the most vulnerable will only be able to do that with our support. Without that support and solidarity, there will continue to be workers paid even less than the pitiful minimum wage. This drags us all down.

I'll leave the last word to CAIC – "The well known slogan 'workers of the world unite' means what it says. It does not mean 'only workers with the correct immigration status unite'."

Blog Bites

(from riseup.net)

The 11th October marked a global day of action against Data Retention. We wish to show our solidarity and support those who are being forced by the by the EU Directive 2006/24/EC to participate in pre-emptive surveillance of communications infrastructure.

ISPs in Europe are being forced by this Directive to be involuntary agents of the police, to store your communications data. We wish to voice our dissent of this attack on privacy and demonstrate our strong support and solidarity for those who fight against this appalling turn of events.

The communication networks of the coming decades are being built now, and we have an important decision to make: will the infrastructure of the future be one that supports freedom or one that is designed to facilitate surveillance and control?

Currently, our communication systems are being redesigned in order to build a spectacularly efficient machine for maintaining total social control. This work is being done by the democratic governments of the world, and the UN, in the name of law enforcement.

These governments have a problem: the internet and new communication technologies are undermining their capacity for lawful surveillance. Their solution to this problem has been to attempt total surveillance of all communication and to require that every internet server becomes a data gathering arm of the government.

The new technologies of packet switching, digitisation, and encryption are fundamentally different from the communication technologies of the past.

Where once it was expensive and difficult to gather surveillance data on a particular person, now one can gather detailed data on millions of people with the push of a button. At the same time, these new communication systems can also be designed to make surveillance almost impossible. Unfortunately, there is no middle ground: either we build systems that are secure or we build systems

page 11 ▸▸

LETTERS AND COMMENT

Comments on Freedom

Firstly congratulations on the consistently high standard of *Freedom*. One small issue though. The Theory and History is really good but sometimes can be hard to follow. The feature on Post-anarchism in the 2nd August issue, for example, is a case in point. It†included references too 'genealogy', 'feminist poststructuralism', 'the repressive hypothesis' along with the phrase "the misalignment of the subject in relation to the discourse". While I certainly do not think readers, particularly of anarchist publications, need to be spoon fed or that articles should be written in the style of A Flux of Pink Indian's lyrics; more straightforward language and brief explanations of theories and concepts people may not be familiar with would be helpful.

A previous edition of *Freedom* raised the issue of whether writers should use their own names when writing articles for the paper. We need to be realistic. This side of the revolution being an anarchist can have risks attached. Employers regularly search perspective employees on the web or look at their Myspace or Facebook pages. Discovering that someone is an anarchist may not particularly help their employment prospects. The State does monitor anarchist activities. A comrade recently had his flat raided by the police. Some comrades are involved in militant anti-fascist activity. It is good that *Freedom* is regularly reporting on what's going on with the far right and antifa's activities. I don't think we should expect antifa comrades to reveal who they are. I don't think that anonymity diminishes their contributions.

Contributors who don't use their real name do so for good reasons that should be respected. As it happens I do use my real name but then I am lucky. I work in a university and can be open about my politics.

Richard Griffin

Blog bites

◂◂ page 10

that are deeply flawed, easily abused, and lend themselves to social control.

The old compact with the democratic states is over: there is no longer an option of limited state surveillance. We must choose between greatly diminished state surveillance or the capacity of total state surveillance. This is simply the nature of the new communication technology.

We demand:

- Freedom of Expression: We must not be required to gather and archive the communication data of our users. We must not be required to allow back-door access to the government to listen in on anyone's communication.
- Freedom of Association: We must be allowed to use communication tools that do not reveal the sender and recipient. The government must not be allowed, legally or technically, to build a map of how our social movements are organised.

A model doomed to failure

The current crisis has deep roots. Some are in the inherent dynamics of capitalism, others in the particular form current capitalism has taken (neo-liberalism). Some flow from the ideological justifications for neo-liberalism which allowed the notion of unregulated finance markets to gain such influence. These are to be found in the neoclassical analysis of the finance market.

According to the Efficient Market Hypothesis, information is disseminated equally among all market participants, they all hold similar interpretations of that information and all can get access to all the credit they need at any time at the same rate. In other words, everyone is considered to be identical in terms of what they know, what they can get and what they do with that knowledge and cash. This results in a theory which argues that stock markets accurately price stocks on the basis of their unknown future earnings, i.e. that these identical expectations by identical investors are correct. In other words, investors are able to correctly predict the future and act in the same way to the same information. Yet if everyone held identical opinions then there would be no trading of shares as trading obviously implies different opinions on how a stock will perform. Similarly, in reality investors are credit rationed, the rate of borrowing tends to rise as the amount borrowed increases and the borrowing rate normally exceeds the leading rate. The developer of the theory was honest enough to state that the "consequence of accommodating such aspects of reality are likely to be disastrous in terms of the usefulness of the resulting theory ... The theory is in a shambles" (W.F. Sharpe, quoted by Keen in *Debunking Economics*, page 233).

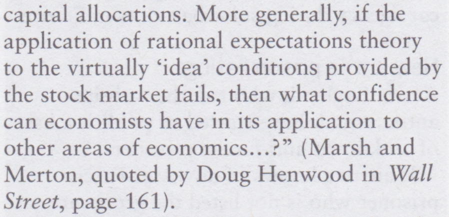
Thus the world was turned into a single person simply to provide a theory which showed that stock markets were 'efficient' (i.e. accurately reflect unknown future earnings). In spite of these slight problems, the theory was accepted in the mainstream as an accurate reflection of finance markets. Why? Well, the implications of this theory are deeply political as it suggests that finance markets will never experience bubbles and deep slumps. That this contradicts the well-known history of the stock market was considered unimportant. Unsurprisingly, "as time went on, more and more data turned up which was not consistent with" the theory. This is because the model's world "is clearly not our world". The theory "cannot apply in a world in which investors differ in their expectations, in which the future is uncertain, and in which borrowing is rationed". It "should never have been given any credibility – yet instead it became an article of faith for academics in finance, and a common belief in the commercial world of finance" (Keen, *op. cit.*, pages 246 and 234).

This theory is at the root of the argument that finance markets should be deregulated and as many funds as possible invested in them. While the theory may benefit the minority of share holders who own the bulk of shares and help them pressurise government policy, it is hard to see how it benefits the rest of society. Alternative, more realistic theories, argue that finance markets show endogenous instability, result in bad investment as well as reducing the overall level of investment as investors will not fund investments which are not predicted to have a sufficiently high rate of return. All of which has a large and negative impact on the real economy. Instead, the economic profession embraced a highly unreal economic theory which has encouraged the world to indulge in stock market speculation as it argues that they do not have bubbles, booms or bursts (that the 1990s stock market bubble finally burst like many previous ones is unlikely to stop this). Perhaps this has to do the implications for economic theory for this farcical analysis of the stock market? As two mainstream economists put it: "To reject the Efficient Market Hypothesis for the whole stock market ... implies broadly that production decisions based on stock prices will lead to inefficient capital allocations. More generally, if the application of rational expectations theory to the virtually 'idea' conditions provided by the stock market fails, then what confidence can economists have in its application to other areas of economics…?" (Marsh and Merton, quoted by Doug Henwood in *Wall Street*, page 161).

Unfortunately for ideology, reality has this bad habit of disproving it. This can be seen today, with the unregulated 'efficient' finance markets proving that the neo-classical dogmas which have justified and rationalised the acts and desires of finance capital are as unrealistic and misleading as the critics argued.

This is not to say that bad economic theory caused this crisis. No, but such ideological positions helped ensure that deregulation desired by finance capital appeared both objective and economically sensible. Such is the magic of the market, with the demand for economic theory to justify the desires for finance being meet with an appropriate supply.

Iain McKay



GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

Marie Mason moved

American prisoner Marie Mason has been moved to a new prison address. Marie recently admitted her involvement with an ELF arson campaign aimed at a University involved with GM crop tests. She was also named by the police as a participant in a number of other ELF actions. Marie is currently on remand awaiting sentencing where she is expected to receive 15–20 years imprisonment. Send letters of support to:

- Marie Jeanette Mason, Clinton County Jail, 1347 East Townsend Road, Saint Johns, MI 48879, USA

Vaggelis released

Vaggelis Botzatzis, the Greek anarchist has been released from prison pending trial. He has been held on remand for 18 months – the maximum time under Greek law he could be kept imprisoned without trial. Therefore the authorities were forced to free him.

Vaggelis (along with three other people whose locations are unknown to the police) has been wrongly accused of the following actions: 1) setting fire to two public power company vehicles protesting the environmental harm caused by the company. 2) Setting fire to a bank in support of political/revolutionary prisoners.3) Setting fire to a French car agency during suburban riots in France.

New antifa prison listings

Antifa England, who run the website antifa.org.uk have started to publish a list of all known anti-fascist prisoners.

If anyone knows of any Anti-Fascist prisoner who is not listed the group are looking for contacts and information.

Total refuser Jan-Patrick

Conscientious objector Jan-Patrick is being detained by the German Authorities and has had some of his books stripped from him, though his lawyer says he is doing well and he has since managed to have some of them returned.

This second arrest follows an initially confused response from the German air force after he entered barracks in Berlin voluntarily on 1st October, but refused to follow any orders. Jan-Patrick has since filed as a conscientious objector application, but this has been objected to by the Bundeswehr.

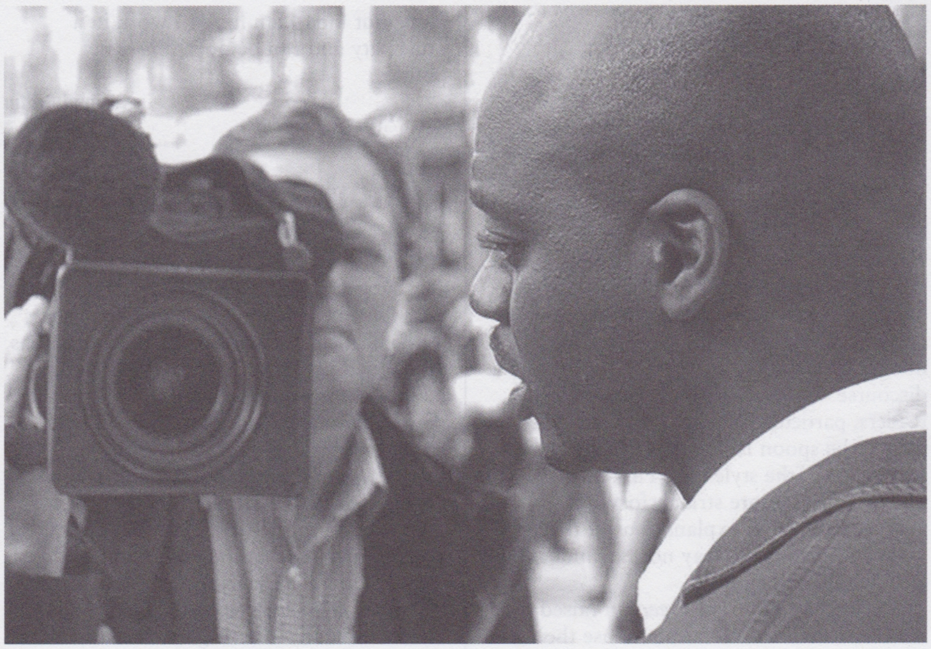
His supporters would like messages of support for Jan-Patrick, to show he is not alone, to be sent in German to the captain who has been responsible for him:

- Captain Laatzen, Bernim Kaserne, Bernim barracks, Umgehungsstrasse 1, Circumvention Street 1, 15344 Strausberg, Germany email michaellaatz@bundeswehr.org

Jan-Patrick's address while he is under arrest in Strausberg:

- Jan-Patrick Ehlert, Barnim-Kaserne, 18 Kompanie Luftwaffenausbildungsregiment, Umgehungsstrasse 1, 15344 Strausberg, Germany

For more go to totalverweigerung.blogsport.de or email totalverweigerung@riseup.net.



● Police riot vans surrounded and intimidated legal protestors and campaign stalls in Liverpool city centre on 11th October, but surrounding crowds helped intervene to block the police and defend the stalls. Two people were arrested and others questioned, while literature and other campaign materials were confiscated.

Political campaigns in Liverpool came together to hold stalls in the city centre and distribute leaflets, both as part of the international Freedom Not Fear demonstrations and to assert the rights to freedom of political expression in the face of local police repression against such stalls.

Political stalls in the city centre have repeatedly been closed down and arrests made by police on the grounds they are obstructing the highway or intimidating customers in nearby shops.

Crowds of passers-by, shocked by the police response, challenged their actions, surrounded and blocked police vehicles, and helped pass out leaflets while police were trying to confiscate them off the stalls.

● The next network-wide gathering of the No Borders Network is to be held in Newcastle on 8th and 9th November.

The gathering will be a chance to discuss, network and plan, and to build on the discussions held at the last network-wide Gathering earlier this year.

A collectively-organised event with shared responsibility for content and organisation, the gathering is being co-ordinated by people in Newcastle. Accommodation will be available, and venue details and directions will be posted nearer the time.

You can contact the collective at whydontyou@post.com if you'd like more information, would like to suggest items for discussion at the Gathering or would like to get involved.

No Borders is a network of groups struggling for the freedom of movement for all and an end to all migration controls. It calls for a radical movement against the system of control, dividing us into citizens and non-citizens.

web: noborders.org.uk

● Amdani Juma (pictured), a refugee HIV prevention and community worker in Nottingham, remains in immediate danger of deportation. A demonstration was held in the city's Market Square on 11th October to show continued support. The demonstration insisted that the Home Office remove the threat of deportation for Amdani.

He was granted bail pending a Judicial Review on 8th June 2008. Since then he has not been allowed to continue with his paid employment and has had to take a 40-mile round trip from Nottingham to Loughborough every week to report. During the long wait and uncertainty, local people have continued to support him and his case and to raise awareness about his contribution to the region. Around 250 people have signed postcards to send to their MPs to highlight that Amdani's work has affected their constituencies.

web: friendsofamdani.wordpress.com

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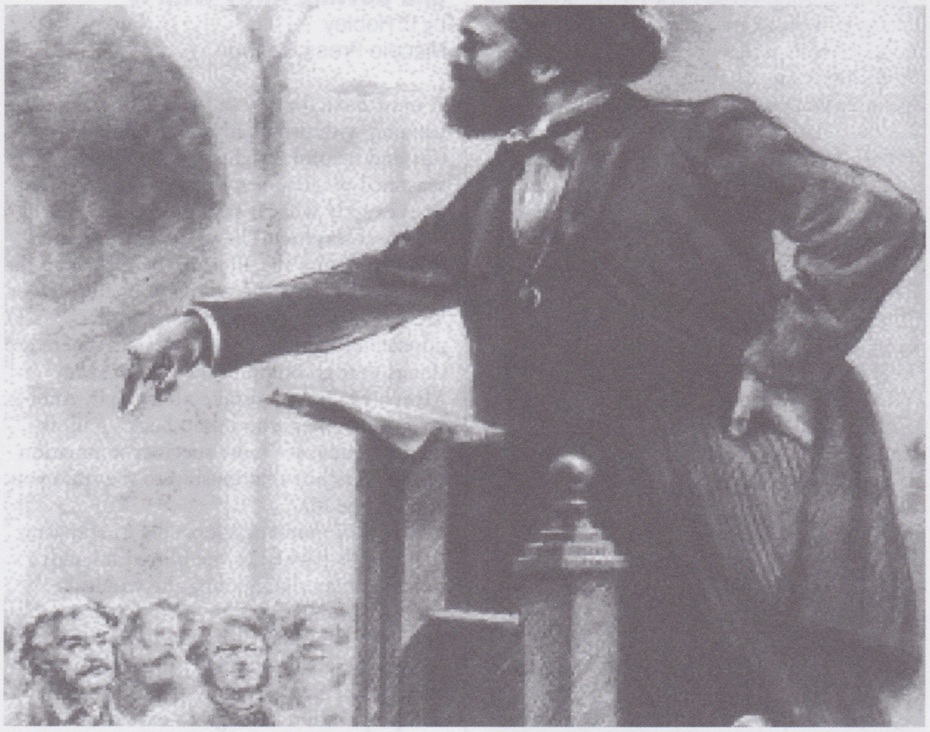
The First International

A short history of the First International



Marx addressing the crowd in 1864

Founded at Saint Martin's Hall, London, in September 1864, the International Workingmen's Association (IWA), also known as the First International, was an international socialist organisation which aimed at uniting a variety of different left-wing political groups and trade union organisations based on class struggle. According to police reports, at its peak the IWA had five million members, although the official journal reported eight million members.

The International Workingmen's Association started out as an alliance of numerous and diverse groups, including French Mutualists, Blanquists, English Owenites, Italian republicans, followers of Mazzini and other socialists of various different persuasions. Over its short life it grew into a major movement, with local federations in many countries developing strong bases of working class activism. Karl Marx was a constant and leading figure from the start, elected to every succeeding General Council of the association.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the wide variety of philosophies present in the First International, there was conflict from the beginning. The first objections to Marx's ideas came from the Mutualists who opposed communism and statism, but shortly after Mikhail Bakunin and his followers (called Collectivists while in the International) joined in 1868, the First International became firmly polarised into two camps, with Marx and Bakunin as their respective figureheads.

Perhaps the clearest differences between the groups emerged over their proposed strategies for achieving their visions of socialism. The anarchists grouped around Bakunin favoured (in Kropotkin's words) "direct economical struggle against capitalism, without interfering in the political parliamentary agitation". Marxist thinking at that time focused on parliamentary activity. For example, when the new German Empire of 1871 became the first country to introduce manhood suffrage, many German socialists became active in the Marxist Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).

During the Geneva Congress of 1866 the Paris group of Proudhonians dominated the discussions. Six Blanquists from Paris came to the Congress to denounce the French representatives as emissaries of Bonaparte, but they were thrown out. A significant decision at this event was the adoption of the eight-hour work day as one of the Association's fundamental demands.

The Lausanne Congress of the International was held on 2nd to 8th September 1867 (minus Karl Marx, who was unable to attend as he was working on the final proofs of *Das Capital*). The Congress was attended by 64 delegates from Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. The reports delivered recorded the increased influence of the International on the working classes in various different countries. The Proudhonist delegates, primarily from France, influenced the orientation of the International's activity and its programmatic principles. Despite the efforts of the General Council's delegates, they succeeded in revising the resolutions of the Geneva Congress, passing a number of their resolutions, in particular on cooperation and credit. However, the Congress confirmed the Geneva Congress resolutions on economic struggle and strikes and passed a resolution on political freedom which emphasised that the social emancipation of workers was inseparable from political liberation. The Proudhonists also failed to seize the leadership of the International, as the Congress re-elected the General Council in its former composition and retained London as its seat.

The Lausanne Congress ignored the General Council's resolution and resolved officially to take part in the Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom. However, this Congress was attended by several General Council and some other International members and failed to resolve its political differences. The Brussels Congress of the International in 1868 approved Marx's tactics in regard to the League, opposing official affiliation to it but calling on the working class to combine efforts with all progressive, anti-military forces.

"Instead of a general congress of the International" writes Bakunin's friend and comrade James Guillaume, "the General Council, controlled by Marx and his friend Engels, in September 1871 convened a secret conference in London, attended almost entirely by partisans of Marx. The conference adopted resolutions destroying the autonomy of the sections and federations of the International and giving the General Council powers that violated the fundamental statutes of the International and the conference."

After the Paris Commune (1871), Bakunin attacked Marx's ideas as authoritarian and predicted that if a Marxist party came to power its leaders would end up just as bad as the ruling class they had fought against. The conflict between the Marxists and the Bakuninists reached its climax with a final split between the two groups at the Hague Congress in 1872. The 1872 Congress was dominated by a bitter battle between the faction around Marx, arguing for participation in parliamentary elections, and the faction around Bakunin who opposed it. Bakunin's faction lost the vote on this issue, and at the end of the congress he and several of his supporters were expelled for supposedly maintaining a secret organisation within the international. This clash is often cited as the origin of the long-running conflict between anarchists and Marxists. From that point onwards, the Marxist and anarchist currents of socialism developed their own distinct organisations, at various points including rival 'internationals'.

In 1872, the First International was relocated to New York. It disbanded four years later at the 1876 Philadelphia conference.

(Adapted from Wikipedia)

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

OCTOBER

until 29th New film about Mumia Abu-Jamal, *In Prison My Whole Life*, showing at the following venues: ***25th*** Corn Exchange, Newbury, 1pm; Hyde Park Picturehouse, Leeds, 2.30pm; City Screen Picturehouse, York, 1pm; Picturehouse at FACT, Liverpool, 3pm; ***26th*** Gate, Notting Hill, 1.45pm (with Q&A session); Screen on the Green, Islington, 2.30pm; Corn Exchange, Newbury, 3.45pm; ***27th*** Cameo, Edinburgh, 7pm; Ritzy, Brixton, 7pm; ***28th*** Exeter Picturehouse, 6.30pm; Belmont Picturehouse, Aberdeen, 6.45pm; Harbour Lights Picturehouse, Southampton, 6.45pm; Dukes Cinema, Lancaster, 8.30pm; ***29th*** Greenwich Picturehouse, 6.30pm; Phoenix Picturehouse, Oxford, 6.30pm; Clapham Picturehouse, 6.30pm.

25th Benefit gig for Bristol ABC and Bristol No Borders from 6pm until late at The White Hart, Whitehall Road, Bristol BS5, see geocities.com/bastardsquadcollective/

25th 'Off with their heads', start of a week of talks, discussions, socials, etc., until 2nd November organised by Bristol Radical History Group, see brh.org.uk

25th Bristol ABC from 11am until 2pm at Kebele, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol, vegan café plus prison support info.

26th Bristol No Borders from 6pm until 9pm at Kebele, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol, vegan dinner plus No Borders talk and film.

27th Aldermaston Big Blockade, Trident Ploughshares will be upholding international law by blockading this nuclear bomb factory in what promises to be a colourful celebration of life and people power, see http://blockawe.blogspot.com or tridentploughshares.org for details.

NOVEMBER

1st Peasants Revolt 2008, a peaceful protest representing communities and individuals suffering under an unsustainable system, march to Hyde Park in London for solidarity rally, see peasantsrevolt.org for details.

1st Labour Movement Conference on class, climate change and clean coal, the climate campers and the unions, to be held at The Upstairs Lounge, The Bridge Hotel, Castle Garth, Newcastle Upon Tyne from 11.30am until 5.30pm with speakers including David Douglass, Rachel Whittaker, Arthur Scargill, Paul Chatterton, Bob Crow and many more, and afterwards there will be a social from 7.30pm with live bands.

1st Prison Abolition strategy meeting at London Activist Resource Centre (LARC), 62 Fieldgate St, Whitechapel, London E1 1ES, from 2pm until 5pm, for more info contact building.safe.communities@gmail.com

2nd The Flight from Responsibility in Modern Society, a talk by Dr Patrick Keeney at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL at 11am, see ethicalsoc.org.uk

7th to 9th London Transgender Film Festival at Ritzy Picturehouse, Coldharbour Lane, London SW2 1JG and B3 Media, Electric Avenue Studios, 3b Electric Avenue, London SW9 8JY, see transgenderfilmfestival.co.uk

BOOKS

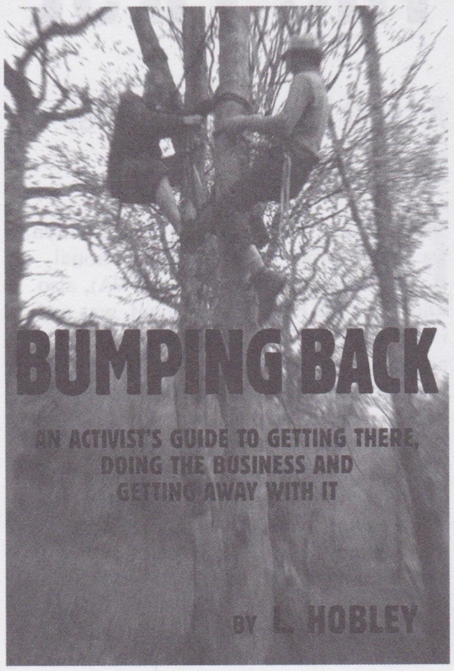
Bumping Back: An Activist's Guide To Getting There, Doing the Business and Getting Away With It

by L. Hobley
Niccolo Press, £9.50

A must-have for any self-respecting activist, teeming with useful advice, invaluable top tips and helpful insights from a clearly seasoned practitioner, this is a book that does exactly what it says on the tin – well, the cover anyway. The title, for those that don't recognise the allusion, derives from the film *Hellboy* and the words of one Professor Trevor 'Broom' Bruttenholm: "In the absence of light, darkness prevails. There are things that go bump in the night, Agent Myers. Make no mistake about that. And we are the ones who bump back" – in its way, perhaps, the most succinct summation of the anarchist relationship to the state you could hope for.

A sort of mini-encyclopaedia of activism, the book is packed to the hilt with handy practical material, guiding the would-be activist (whether you are a complete newbie or an old hand there's bound to be something for you here) sure-footedly through every stage of the process, from planning, training and preparation through to execution and escape. Divided into five sections, part one provides an introduction to important general considerations involved in any action ("practical hints, philosophical musings, politics, morals, sex and violence"). Part two covers researching the target and planning, including hints on forensics, security, arranging rendezvous, choosing vehicles and how to disguise yourself. Part three looks at the action itself and "gives an overview of a way of conducting a generic action". Part four offers a bumper pack of party tricks, "the technical skills you will need to successfully carry out some of the more interesting actions" – anything from navigation skills, first aid and survival techniques to tree-stirruping and prussiking. And part five looks briefly at how to clear up once the party's over.

Lavishly illustrated and clearly laid out, Bumping Back can be read from cover-to-cover or it can function equally well as a reference book. Add to this a liberal sprinkling of quotes, gems of wisdom from such a diverse range of thinkers as Octave Mirbeau, Friedrich Nietszche, Ueshiba Morihei (the founder of Aikido and author of *The Art of Peace*), Sun Tsu (the author of *The Art of War*) – even that most knowledgeable and principled of sages, Winnie the Pooh – and you have a book that is both hugely enjoyable and genuinely functional.


BUMPING BACK
AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE TO GETTING THERE, DOING THE BUSINESS AND GETTING AWAY WITH IT
BY L. HOBLEY

All in all it's very nicely put together, and pretty good value for money too, given the price of books these days. L. Hobley and the Niccolo Press must certainly be congratulated for their efforts. If you're planning an action at any time in the future – and let's hope, with capitalism on the back foot of late, that the coming months and years will see a long needed rise in militancy – you could do much worse than to bag yourself a copy of this book. As Margaret Mead famously said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

Anton Pawluk

QUIZ ANSWERS

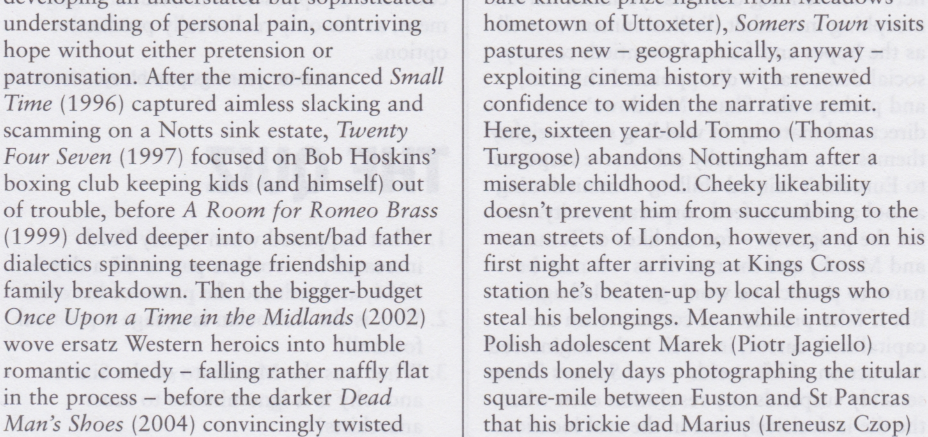
1. He was successfully sued by other stockholders. The judge ruled that his company was to be operated solely for the benefit of shareholders, not for charitable purposes or public health.
2. For most speakers of it and nearly all linguists, Valencian is a dialect of Catalan. Right wing politicians in Valencia claim it is a separate language, chiefly to irritate the Catalans. Many of the fiercest defenders of the Valencian language, as opposed to dialect, don't even speak it. The Spanish government produced one document translated into all its regional languages, and the Catalan and Valencian versions were identical.
3. It was the pro-Allied document signed by Kropotkin and other anarchists during World War One, rejected by the vast majority of anarchists who took an internationalist position.
4. It is a way of using copyright law to ensure that future versions of a work are free to copy and distribute, so long as that same right is passed on.

Somers Town

Tom Jennings appreciates Shane Meadows' sly cinematic commentary on our changing times in this low-key coming-of-age tale

East Midlands film-maker Shane Meadows has consistently crafted acutely-observed studies of the effects of capitalism's structural adjustment in contemporary Britain where it has hit hardest in post-industrial working-class communities – his distinctive theme being male efforts at forging functional social networks to survive drudgery and despair under pressure from both material and psychic infrastructures decaying beyond repair. In scripts co-written with Paul Fraser, sharp wit and spot-on dialogue retain affection for and empathy with realistically conflicted characters while developing an understated but sophisticated understanding of personal pain, contriving hope without either pretension or patronisation. After the micro-financed *Small Time* (1996) captured aimless slacking and scamming on a Notts sink estate, *Twenty Four Seven* (1997) focused on Bob Hoskins' boxing club keeping kids (and himself) out of trouble, before *A Room for Romeo Brass* (1999) delved deeper into absent/bad father dialectics spinning teenage friendship and family breakdown. Then the bigger-budget *Once Upon a Time in the Midlands* (2002) wove ersatz Western heroics into humble romantic comedy – falling rather naffly flat in the process – before the darker *Dead Man's Shoes* (2004) convincingly twisted generic macho conventions with Paddy Considine's Falklands vet relentlessly avenging his intellectually-challenged kid brother's victimisation.

Returning to intimate resonance, the partly-autobiographical skinhead story *This Is England* (2006; discussed in *Freedom*, 30th June and 14th July 2007) more successfully conveyed modern social and political interconnectivity. Now, before the long-planned *King of the Gypsies* (about a bare-knuckle prize-fighter from Meadows' hometown of Uttoxeter), *Somers Town* visits pastures new – geographically, anyway – exploiting cinema history with renewed confidence to widen the narrative remit. Here, sixteen year-old Tommo (Thomas Turgoose) abandons Nottingham after a miserable childhood. Cheeky likeability doesn't prevent him from succumbing to the mean streets of London, however, and on his first night after arriving at Kings Cross station he's beaten-up by local thugs who steal his belongings. Meanwhile introverted Polish adolescent Marek (Piotr Jagiello) spends lonely days photographing the titular square-mile between Euston and St Pancras that his brickie dad Marius (Ireneusz Czop) is working overtime to help gentrify – in particular taking countless snaps of Maria (Elisa Lasowski), a French greasy-spoon waitress he has a crush on. The unlikely lads hook up and vie for her attentions in between skivvying for low-rent spiv Graham (Perry Benson), and Marek smuggles Tommo into his room unbeknownst to Marius. The arrangement goes pear-shaped when they drunkenly wreck the flat after Maria suddenly disappears back to Paris, whereupon Graham puts Tommo up and he and Marek fantasise reunion with her courtesy of Eurostar.

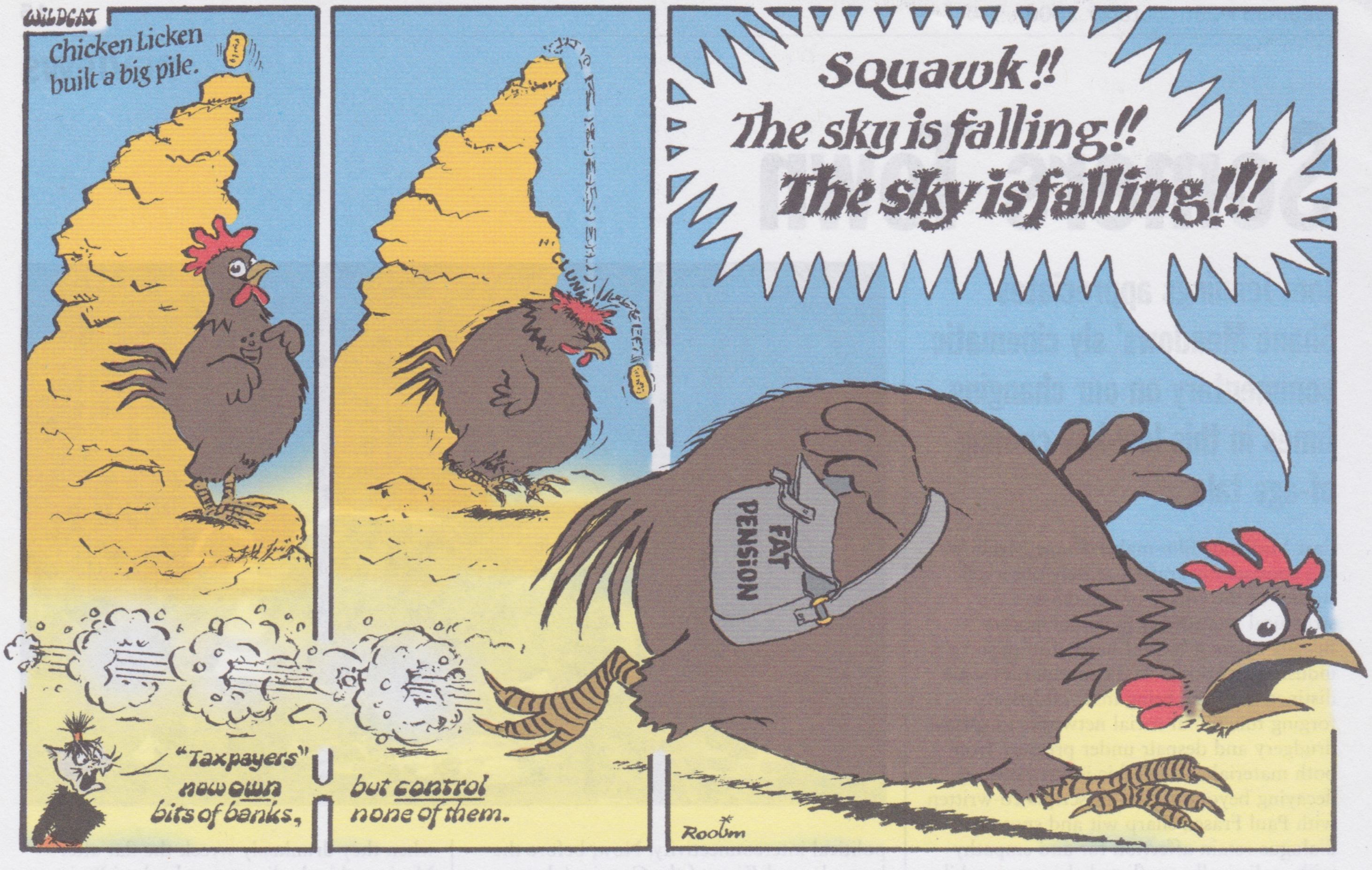


New wave goodbye

Despite its deceptively light touch, slender running time (71 minutes) and generally life-affirming tone, *Somers Town* harbours more interesting undercurrents than may be initially apparent. As usual the comic accuracy of the banter is enhanced by improvisation, so that the subtle, engaging performances render somewhat unbelievable relationships satisfying and highlight the many set-piece gags and pratfalls. Moreover, Meadows' trademark attention to details of place and movement within neglected and transitional spaces offers crucial small measures of freedom otherwise belied by heavy constraints on possible action. But the film transcends even these worthy (if parochial) achievements by deftly incorporating moods, scenarios and developments originally deployed in a whole swathe of distinctive European social-realist codes – the viewer's long experience of which (irrespective of awareness) prompting specific expectations that can then be played with. Yet such elements are not flaunted with knowing postmodern flash and artifice. Instead they emerge unobtrusively and organically in the characters' trajectories through happenstance, idle choice or practical necessity – and never distort or mystify a story more salient to the world-weary disoriented DIY cynicism of this rotten new millennium than the over-simplistic clean-cut idealism of the last century's angry young grammar-school graduates marching into the media.

So, minimal co-ordinates would include

page 16 ▶▶


WILDCAT
Chicken Licken built a big pile.
Squawk!! The sky is falling!! The sky is falling!!!
FAT PENSION
"Taxpayers" now own bits of banks,
but control none of them.
Roobm

Review

◀◀ page 15

postwar Italian neo-realism's naturalistic portraits of hard labour and even grimmer class and gender norms yielding stoic tragedies of wasted life, shading into 1950s Northern UK kitchen-sink protagonists impotently banging heads against the brick walls of an unjust status quo. And whereas the French New Wave's iconic *Jules et Jim* et al shocked elders and betters with rebellious lifestyles, London's Swinging Sixties dreamt of dissolving all tradition in consumer ecstasy, while Polish and Czech experiments with black-and-white expressionism and surrealism were soon crushed by Stalinism. Traces of all these dimensions and levels of cultural rites of passage converge and collide here – referencing universal youthful naïvete morphing into adult disillusionment as well as the hopes and fears of twentieth century social democracy's disappointed children, and perhaps also Shane Meadows' own directorial maturity in wielding such weighty themes in a whimsically subversive response to Eurostar's tainted shilling commissioning a cool art-film to feed corporate vanity. As for the prognosis – for the likes of Tommo and Marek, and the rest of us – it may be naïve to predict we won't get fooled again. But if false promises of consumerism are capitalism's carrot, its stick is the engineered destruction of lifeworlds – and *Somers Town* sensibly suspends any resolution even when the die is decisively cast in the real location. Nevertheless the film clearly proffers horizontal rather than upward mobility, and collective as opposed to individual engagement, as the only realistically productive options.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

THE QUIZ

1. What happened when Henry Ford increased his workers pay to $5 a day in 1914, and reduced the prices of his cars?
2. Why is the Valencian language a political football?
3. What was the Manifesto of the Sixteen and why is it ignominious to most anarchists?
4. What is copyleft?

Answers on page 14

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chool – a monstrous imposition

now suddenly become *de facto* crimes and illustrative of criminal behaviour. The supermarkets now demand you look 25 or 30 to buy it, or else produce ID. The push to raise the age to 21 is clearly on.

Actually being teenagers hanging out together without alcohol is clearly deemed a crime in many areas with cops and community officers chasing young people off their own estates and demanding they stay home.All of this is a stalking horse for ever-increasing sexually repressive laws. Until recently the age of consent in Britain was 16, but piece by piece the Blair/Brown government has been pushing this to 18 in line with most US states, by adding more and more restrictions as to who can actually have sex at this age. At present you can marry at 16 in Britain, have a husband or wife and children and a home; how will this fit in with compulsory school attendance until 18?

The two laws are clearly incompatible.

This is all to reinforce the process to infantilise young adults. American 'rape' laws have been steadily introduced which changed the existing laws of 'unlawful sexual intercourse' to 'rape'. Consenting underage teenagers would hitherto be denied the fact of actual consent and instead be deemed 'raped' regardless of facts of the relationship, or indeed the fact that their partners are usually their teenage boy/girl friends.

Things have changed right enough from when I were a lad, we'd have been rioting in the street, refusing to go, and hordes of lefties of all descriptions would be taking up our cause. Perhaps resurrecting the old US slogan 'Hell No We Won't Go!'

So we've got the cause, got the slogan, where's the protests? None so far, and one wonders deeply why?

From an educational point of view, there are at any one time hundreds and thousands of teenagers forced to attend school which offers them nothing and they hate. They 'kick off' daily at school, attack teachers, wreck schools and make life a misery for the youngsters who actually want to be there. Both groups can't wait for the sixteenth birthday so that the dissidents can leave, and they be allowed to work without harassment and distraction.

Those who leave can't wait to get work, money in their pocket, enter young adulthood and be free of the constraints of parents and school authority. In days gone by masses of them would enter the industrial workforce and join unions, take an interest in the world of work, and by a diverse route often discover training, education, and political involvement.

A great many mature students would take up higher education in their late twenties, thirties and older, or would develop non-vocational education discovering that education can actually be fun and not associated with having your individuality and freedom ripped out.

The alternative is what we are now being forced to have, childhood forced down your